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Thematic evaluation of United Nations coordinating bodies

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

"Coordinating bodies add value in aligning policies and sharing information, but are less effective in coordinating programme delivery and strengthening organizational performance"

Summary

This report fulfils the request of the Committee for Programme and Coordination that the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) conduct a thematic evaluation of United Nations coordinating bodies, to be undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272.

OIOS assessed the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness (including impact) of seven coordinating bodies:

- the Executive Committee on Peace and Security
- the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs
- the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs
- the United Nations Development Group
- the Senior Management Group
- the Policy Committee
- the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board

* E/AC.51/2009/1.

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OIOS recognizes that there are many more coordination entities in the Organization than just these seven and notes that the precise number of these entities is unknown. It selected these seven bodies because of their focus on programmatic rather than management and administrative issues, as well as their cross-cutting scope. Given its mandate, OIOS restricted its assessment to how the work of these bodies affects the Secretariat.

The coordinating bodies are recognized as adding value in meeting overall coordination needs in the Secretariat. They are working towards achieving greater coherence and complementarity in a complex environment characterized by a multitude of actors with sometimes overlapping mandates. While the bodies are most effective in sharing information and aligning strategies, policies and programme planning, they are far less effective in rationalizing programme delivery and in strengthening organizational performance.

Weaknesses in the structures and work processes of the coordinating bodies such as unclear membership and convenor roles, inadequate work planning and meeting procedures, and insufficient follow-up to their decisions, hinder the achievement of their respective objectives. Further strengthening is also required in establishing clearer roles and objectives for the bodies and in achieving greater coherence between them.

In order to strengthen the coordinating bodies as coordination mechanisms, OIOS makes five recommendations to the Secretary-General and the convenors of the coordinating bodies, including:

- Review and refine the mandates and composition of the four original executive committees and the role of the Senior Management Group
- Strengthen the working procedures of the coordinating bodies
- Enhance the information flow between the Policy Committee and the executive committees
- Monitor and report on the implementation of workplans of the coordinating bodies assessed in this report

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 14 of its resolution 61/235, endorsed the selection by the Committee for Programme and Coordination of the topic "United Nations coordinating bodies" for a thematic evaluation, to be undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B, 54/244 and 59/272 (A/61/16 and Corr.1, para. 370). The present report will be submitted to the Committee at its forty-ninth session, in June 2009.

2. The objective of the evaluation is to determine as systematically and objectively as possible the relevance, efficiency and effectiveness (including impact)[1] of bodies established to facilitate and enhance coordination in the United Nations. For the purpose of this evaluation, coordinating bodies are defined as United Nations entities that synchronize the activities of their members to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness in pursuit of common objectives.

3. The Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) recognizes that there are many more coordination entities in the Organization than the seven covered in the present report and notes that their precise number is unknown. These seven were selected for two main reasons. Firstly, in line with the function of the Committee for Programme and Coordination as the main subsidiary organ of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly for planning, programming and coordination,[2] this evaluation focuses on coordinating bodies that concern themselves with substantive programme issues as opposed to management and administration issues. Secondly, OIOS selected these seven bodies because of their cross-cutting scope. The seven bodies that OIOS reviewed are listed in the table below (see also annexes I and II for additional information).

Coordinating bodies reviewed by the Office of Internal Oversight Services

Name of coordinating body	*Year established*	*Membership*	*Main coordination area*
Executive Committee on Peace and Security	1997	Selected Secretariat and United Nations system entities	Peace and security
Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs	1997	Selected Secretariat and United Nations system entities	Economic and social matters
Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs	1997	Selected Secretariat and United Nations system entities	Humanitarian affairs
United Nations Development Group	1997; restructured in 2008	Selected Secretariat and United Nations system entities	United Nations activities at the regional and country levels

[1] ST/SGB/2000/8, regulation 7.1.

[2] Economic and Social Council resolution 2008 (LX) of 14 May 1976.

Name of coordinating body	*Year established*	*Membership*	*Main coordination area*
Senior Management Group	1997	All Secretariat entities	Exchange of information and experiences between the Secretary-General and heads of departments, offices, funds and programmes
Policy Committee	2005	Selected Secretariat entities	Strategic guidance and policy decisions on thematic and country-specific issues
High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations system Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB)	2000	United Nations system entities	Strategic planning and programme development and implementation in substantive programme areas

4. These bodies are not all convened by Secretariat entities and all have non-Secretariat members. In view of the limits of the OIOS mandate, the evaluation scope is restricted to how the work of these coordinating bodies affects the Secretariat. Furthermore, OIOS was mindful of the different focus of each body. The Senior Management Group is primarily an information-sharing body, while the Policy Committee primarily considers issues that require strategic guidance and policy decisions by the Secretary-General. The other five bodies are focused on contributing to policy, programme and operational decisions with a view towards strengthening policy coherence and cost-effectiveness of United Nations operations. All seven, except for the Senior Management Group, prepare analyses and policy and programme proposals for the consideration of Member States and coordinate the implementation of decisions of intergovernmental bodies.

5. The present report has been reviewed by the relevant departments and their comments have been incorporated or appear in italics as appropriate.

II. Methodology

6. In conducting the evaluation, OIOS utilized six qualitative and quantitative methods: (a) a desk review of publicly available United Nations documents, as well as of internal documents provided by the coordinating bodies and United Nations system entities, such as meeting agendas and notes, procedural guidelines and discussion papers; (b) nine in-depth interviews with the convenors and secretariats of the coordinating bodies under review; (c) 99 in-depth interviews with member representatives of all seven coordinating bodies (department heads or their designated senior managers), including 23 with key non-Secretariat members; (d) a self-administered Web survey of the universe of Secretariat departmental focal points designated for this evaluation;[3] (e) a self-administered Web survey of the universe

[3] Referred to as "department focal point survey", the survey was conducted from 28 October to 22 December 2008 and was sent to 28 Secretariat focal points; 28 responses were received for a 100 per cent response rate.

of programme managers in the Secretariat;[4] and (f) direct observation of one meeting of each of five coordinating bodies.[5]

7. In assessing the effectiveness of the coordinating bodies under review, OIOS considered two indicators: utility and impact. Using eight different coordination measures[6] derived from the mandates of the coordinating bodies, OIOS assessed their utility and impact in four broad areas: (a) policy development and programme planning; (b) information sharing; (c) programme delivery; and (d) organizational performance. Programme delivery is understood as the implementation of work programmes. Positive changes in organizational performance were indicated by reduced duplication or overlap of efforts, more efficient programme delivery and increased quality of programme results.

8. There are several limitations to the evaluation methodology. First, OIOS did not conduct a comprehensive review of all activities of the coordinating bodies, but rather focused on the general architecture, work processes and results of the bodies being assessed. OIOS reviewed the five coordinating bodies established in the 1997 United Nations reforms, plus the Policy Committee and the High-level Committee on Programmes, but did not include any of the many other coordination mechanisms that exist in the Organization. The universe of programme managers surveyed is derived from information in the 2007 report on the composition of the Secretariat. While every effort was made to identify those staff with managerial functions, a precise determination might not always have been possible. Lastly, given the limited number of meetings of the coordinating bodies convened during the evaluation time frame, it was only possible to observe one meeting of each of five coordinating bodies; these meetings may not have been typical of the body observed.

III. Background

9. The coordinating bodies reviewed in the present evaluation result mostly from the reform programme initiated in 1997 by then Secretary-General Kofi Annan (see A/51/950). The reforms were aimed at moving the Organization towards greater unity of purpose, coherence of effort and flexibility in response. In order to transform the Organization into a more effective, modernized and relevant instrument at the service of the international community, the Secretary-General established various bodies to rationalize and streamline work in all substantive areas.

10. In January 1997, the Secretary-General reorganized the Secretariat's work programme around five areas comprising the core missions of the United Nations: peace and security; economic and social affairs; development cooperation;

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[4] Referred to as "programme manager survey", the survey was conducted from 18 November to 19 December 2008 and was sent to 645 Secretariat managers at the P-5 and higher levels whose functional titles indicated that they had management responsibilities for substantive work; 254 responses were received, for a 38 per cent response rate.

[5] Policy Committee, Executive Committee on Peace and Security, Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations Development Group.

[6] These are: (a) aligned strategies and policies; (b) increased accessibility and timeliness of information; (c) aligned programme planning; (d) reduced duplication or overlap of efforts; (e) more efficient programme delivery; (f) increased quality of programme results; (g) increased satisfaction of programme clients; and (h) improved image and reputation of the United Nations.

humanitarian affairs; and human rights. Executive committees were established in the first four areas to "sharpen the contribution that each unit makes to the overall objectives of the Organization by reducing duplication of effort and facilitating greater complementarity and coherence" (A/51/950, para. 29).[7] The issue of human rights was designated as cutting across each of the four committees and the incorporation of a gender perspective was identified as an important dimension of their work (see A/51/829, p. 3). All United Nations departments, programmes and funds were assigned to one or more of the committees (A/51/950, para. 28).

11. Also in 1997, the Secretary-General established the Senior Management Group to ensure "strategic coherence and direction in the work of the United Nations" (ST/SGB/1997/3). It was chaired by the Secretary-General and, in addition to the Deputy Secretary-General and the Chef de Cabinet, comprised the convenors of the four executive committees, seven heads of departments and the Directors-General of the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. Other heads of programmes, funds or departments and executive secretaries of the regional commissions participated as needed.

12. For the purpose of streamlining and improving the decision-making processes at the Secretariat executive level, in 2005 the Secretary-General established two new high-level committees, the Policy Committee and the Management Committee, and amended the terms of reference of the Senior Management Group (ST/SGB/2005/16). The Senior Management Group is now intended to function as a forum for exchange of information and experiences among all the heads of departments, offices, funds and programmes of the United Nations. The Secretary-General may also use it to raise and provide guidance on important cross-cutting issues.

13. The primary objective of the Policy Committee is to consider issues requiring strategic guidance and policy decisions on thematic and country-specific issues affecting the Organization and to identify emerging issues (ST/SGB/2005/16, para. 1.1), thus effectively assuming the original role of the Senior Management Group but with a more limited membership. The Committee is chaired by the Secretary-General, meets once a week and comprises 13 members.

14. The United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination, formerly the Administrative Committee on Coordination, was established in 1946 to further coordination and cooperation on substantive and management issues throughout the United Nations system.[8] It approves policy statements on behalf of the United Nations system as a whole. The Board brings together on a regular basis the executive heads of the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Trade Organization under the chairmanship of the United Nations Secretary-General. Since a reorganization in 2000, the Board is supported by the High-level Committee on Programmes, responsible for coordination of substantive programme areas, and the High-level Committee on Management, responsible for coordination of strategic

[7] The Executive Committee on Peace and Security was established for peace and security matters, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs for economic and social affairs, the United Nations Development Group for development cooperation and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs for humanitarian affairs.

[8] http://unsystemceb.org/reference/ceb/resolution_13.

management areas.[9] A review of the structure of the Chief Executives Board and its working methods in 2008 resulted in the inclusion of the United Nations Development Group as the third pillar of the Board.

15. The chair of the High-level Committee on Programmes is appointed for two years by the Chief Executives Board. For the period 2009 to 2010, the Committee is being chaired by the Director-General of the International Labour Organization. The Committee brings together the most senior programme managers of the United Nations system. In addition to its role of scanning and identifying emerging programme issues that require a system-wide response, the Committee serves as the system-wide mechanism to follow up on intergovernmental decisions.

IV. Evaluation findings

A. The value added of the seven coordinating bodies is generally recognized

Stakeholders acknowledge their relevance as coordination platforms

16. The seven coordinating bodies in the scope of the present evaluation are meeting an important need for coordination in the Organization. A majority of department focal point survey respondents with an opinion agree that all the bodies meet coordination needs that might not otherwise be addressed (70 per cent or more for each body). As examples, most interviewees say that the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs is valuable for promoting complementarity in humanitarian affairs, that the United Nations Development Group is necessary for United Nations system coordination at the country level and that the Policy Committee is key to streamlining decision-making and ensuring policy coherence in the Secretariat. Even where concerns exist about how the bodies operate and what they achieve (as will be discussed in findings C to E below), no interviewees propose that they be abolished; rather, enhancements are suggested to their structures and working methods. Lastly, the coordinating bodies are perceived to have added value in improving the image and reputation of the United Nations, especially given that Member States have called upon the United Nations system to strengthen coherence of its activities.[10] Most department focal points (69 per cent) report that the coordinating bodies have had a positive impact in this regard.

17. The report of the independent High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment states, inter alia, that "mechanisms for inter-agency coordination [...] have enhanced coordination between the humanitarian organizations of the United Nations and with non-United Nations partners" (A/61/583, para. 20) and also that the High-level Committee on Programmes has "developed more coherent approaches to system-wide themes and coordinated approaches to reform business processes" (A/61/583, para. 63).

[9] OIOS did not assess the High-level Committee on Management. Before 2000, the High-level Committee on Programmes was known as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions.

[10] OIOS refers to "value added" in the context of filling a need not met by other mechanisms.

18. The primary value of the coordinating bodies reviewed, as revealed by survey and interview data as well as by OIOS observations of selected meetings of coordinating bodies, is to (a) provide platforms for exchanging information and ideas; (b) work towards common strategies and work approaches; and (c) promote a sense of common purpose. These perceived benefits directly correlate with the coordination needs of Secretariat programmes; sharing information, enhancing cooperation and achieving greater work efficiencies are the main reasons department focal points cite for coordinating with other United Nations entities.

19. OIOS notes examples of effective coordination in the meetings of the coordinating bodies it observed. In a meeting of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs, the humanitarian crisis in one country was discussed and members were invited to provide support to the humanitarian country team in formulating a common protection strategy to ensure that all aspects of protection were fully reflected in the country's humanitarian activities. In a meeting of the United Nations Development Group, OIOS noted the endorsement of the United Nations action plan for further implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010, including specific country-level actions and practical steps to be taken by United Nations country teams. In all the meetings attended, OIOS observed behaviours necessary for effective collaboration, such as debate on multiple sides of an issue and acknowledgement of and appreciation for opposing views.

Value added is diminished by several factors

20. Not all the coordinating bodies reviewed by OIOS are perceived to have sufficiently adapted to changes in the work environment. Most department focal points believe that the work of the Executive Committees on Peace and Security, Economic and Social Affairs and Humanitarian Affairs has not sufficiently adapted to respond to changing coordination needs in their respective departments.[11] Several interviewees state that these executive committees were conceived more than a decade ago and that given organizational changes since then, their activities need to be reviewed and revised.[12] Furthermore, several interviewees say that the seven coordinating bodies are not sufficiently timely in addressing certain issues, especially where a more immediate coordinated response is needed, such as in humanitarian contexts. OIOS acknowledges that these factors are not completely under the control of the coordinating bodies or their members, although there is a need for the bodies to be proactive in responding to imminent and emerging issues.

21. The value added of the seven coordinating bodies to programme managers below the level of Assistant Secretary-General is less clear. With the exception of the United Nations Development Group, less than half of the programme managers surveyed indicate that one or more of the other coordinating bodies are relevant to

[11] Of department focal points who express an opinion, 8 out of 14 disagree or strongly disagree that the work of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security has adapted; 6 out of 10 disagree or strongly disagree that the work of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs has adapted; and 6 out of 8 disagree or strongly disagree that the work of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs has adapted. Out of 12 focal points, 8 agree that the United Nations Development Group has adapted its work to changing departmental coordination needs.

[12] During the conduct of this evaluation, OIOS learned from several sources that, following a decision by the Policy Committee in 2007, a review of the four original executive committees was undertaken by the office of the Deputy Secretary-General.

them; in fact, 9 per cent say that none of the seven coordinating bodies under review are relevant to their role as a programme manager.[13] Nevertheless, the majority (75 per cent) report that the coordinating bodies are important in guiding activities in their work area; this may be due to the fact that programme managers acknowledge the requirement to incorporate policy decisions taken by the coordinating bodies into their work. Few say they provide input into or draft documents for the coordinating bodies, contribute to working groups or task forces of the bodies, or represent their departments in meetings of the bodies.

B. The seven coordinating bodies are most effective in aligning policies and programme planning and in sharing information

The coordinating bodies assist in the alignment of policies and strategies

22. Survey and interview data, as well as the independent assessment by OIOS of achievements and outputs of the coordinating bodies, indicate that the seven bodies in the scope of the present evaluation have been most effective in facilitating policy coherence (see annex III).[14] A large majority of programme managers (82 per cent) say that the coordinating bodies are very or somewhat useful in increasing alignment of policies and strategies, including nearly one third who say the bodies are very useful in this regard.[15] This is the measure with the highest utility rating given by programme managers; one states that "the fact that the coordinating bodies exist and produce policy guidance and common positions is itself highly motivating for all who wish to see a more unified United Nations". Similarly, most department focal points (82 per cent) report that the coordinating bodies have had significant or moderate impact on greater alignment of strategies and policies, including approximately one third, who characterize such impact as significant. This is the measure with the highest impact rating. More than three quarters of department focal points (77 per cent) believe that the coordinating bodies have been very or somewhat influential in guiding policies and activities in their department.[15]

23. The coordinating bodies reviewed by OIOS are seen as important in bringing the United Nations system together for a comprehensive and integrated perspective on complex and multifaceted issues. The Policy Committee, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the High-level Committee on Programmes have facilitated policy coherence and built common United Nations positions on emerging key global issues such as international migration and development, violence against women, climate change, food security, the financial crisis and South-South cooperation. Numerous references are also made to the work of the High-level Committee on Programmes, the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs in supporting the Millennium Declaration, which has provided an important common framework

[13] The Policy Committee was considered relevant by 42 per cent of programme managers; the Executive Committee on Peace and Security by 40 per cent; the Senior Management Group by 38 per cent; the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs by 34 per cent; the High-level Committee on Programmes by 29 per cent; and the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs by 28 per cent. The United Nations Development Group was considered relevant by 50 per cent of programme managers surveyed.

[14] OIOS is aware that not all measures in annex III are equally relevant to all coordinating bodies.

[15] See annex III; individual ratings by coordinating body were averaged for an overall rating for all seven bodies.

to harness the range of United Nations expertise to collectively support the achievement of organizational objectives. OIOS notes the success of such initiatives may be attributed in part to broad agendas that have wide relevance across the membership of the coordinating bodies, as well as to support from the Secretary-General, senior leaders and Member States. Policy coherence gains are also associated with United Nations meetings and other global conferences, such as the High-level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, the Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to Review the Implementation of the Monterrey Consensus, the high-level event on climate change and the fourteenth Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, in Poznan. The coordinating bodies were effective in preparing joint position papers and joint statements for these meetings, allowing the United Nations to speak coherently with one voice on complex issues (see also A/59/2005, para. 11).

The coordinating bodies are also having some effect on enhancing coordination of programme planning

24. The seven coordinating bodies reviewed by OIOS are moving departments towards greater coherence in programme planning. Eighty per cent of programme managers report that these coordinating bodies are very or somewhat useful in enhancing coordination of programme planning and 75 per cent say that they have had utility in improving complementarity of activities.[16] Fewer department focal points (57 per cent) say these coordinating bodies have had an impact in aligning programme planning, although more (73 per cent) believe that these bodies have had a significant or moderate impact on achieving better coherence of programme activities.[16]

25. Several examples illustrate how the coordinating bodies reviewed by OIOS have contributed to more synchronized programme planning. Firstly, a number of interviewees refer to the coordinated budget planning exercise in the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs as beneficial for enhancing coherence and reducing duplication in its members' programmes. Further, programme managers rate that Executive Committee's utility as highest with regard to enhancing coordination of programme planning, which may be associated with its major focus on coordinating the preparation of strategic frameworks and programme budgets. The "Stop Rape Now: United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict" initiative, supported by the Executive Committee on Peace and Security, demonstrates another positive result, from the alignment of United Nations entities to better coordinate programmatic efforts in addressing sexual violence.

26. At the country level, OIOS notes that the Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs have played a role in the facilitation of greater coordination between the civilian and military components of field missions, as well as with United Nations country teams. In interviews, specific reference was also made to work of the seven coordinating bodies in promoting the integration of United Nations assistance across short-term security and humanitarian needs and longer term development objectives. Other positive examples were associated with the work of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs in support of

[16] See annex III; individual ratings by coordinating body were averaged for an overall rating for all seven bodies.

common humanitarian advocacy and protection strategies for numerous countries. The High-level Committee on Programmes has developed a Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work, aimed at assisting United Nations system entities to assess and improve employment and decent work outcomes of their policies, programmes and activities.

27. Survey and interview data also reveal that the United Nations Development Group has contributed to greater coherence of United Nations planning activities at the country level. Interviewees cite such collective instruments as the United Nations development assistance framework, guidance on joint programmes and the multi-donor trust fund facility. The ongoing United Nations Development Group "Delivering as one" country pilots were reported as another important development towards increased coordination and coherence and a shift towards more unified United Nations country-level operational activities with one leader, one programme, one budgetary framework and one office.[17]

Sharing of information is another strength of the coordinating bodies

28. Information sharing is considered a further strength of the seven coordinating bodies. Being better informed about the mandates, strategies and activities of partners is seen by interviewees as promoting transparency and accountability. Three quarters of programme managers (78 per cent) say that the coordinating bodies have been very or somewhat useful in increasing accessibility and timeliness of information, including nearly one quarter who say the coordinating bodies have been very useful in this regard. Similarly, 60 per cent of department focal points report that the coordinating bodies are helpful in sharing good practices and lessons learned.

29. Interview data and OIOS observations reveal specific benefits of information sharing. For example, several interviewees report that the Senior Management Group is valuable for obtaining information on the Secretary-General's views and strategic priorities. The Policy Committee, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs and the High-level Committee on Programmes are valued for sharing views and gaining wider perspectives on normative frameworks, policies and substantive issues that go beyond the scope of individual organization mandates. The Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs provide important platforms for information sharing on political aspects of crisis countries, enabling members to respond more effectively to those countries' needs. In addition, briefings by special representatives of the Secretary-General, resident coordinators and other field staff were cited as very useful in providing country-level perspectives and thereby better informing the deliberations of the Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs. Likewise, members of the United Nations Development Group say it provides an important platform for sharing experiences on country-level operational activities. OIOS also observed numerous occasions of participants sharing information about their work and their perspectives on a particular topic, such as a discussion on regional integration of United Nations activities where participants offered their views on how to further enhance such integration. OIOS notes that the coordinating bodies under review are perceived to be particularly beneficial in facilitating access to

[17] The eight pilot countries are Albania, Cape Verde, Mozambique, Pakistan, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay and Viet Nam.

information, above all for relatively smaller United Nations entities and for those that are located further away from New York Headquarters.

The coordinating bodies are reported to be somewhat helpful in mainstreaming human rights and gender

30. Approximately half of department focal point and programme manager survey respondents believe the seven coordinating bodies to be of some help in providing guidance on the cross-cutting issues of human rights and gender. Interviewees point out that the original four executive committees and the High-level Committee on Programmes have made some progress on mainstreaming gender into policies and frameworks, for example through the development of tools such as the United Nations Development Group "gender scorecard" and advocacy campaigns for gender equality and women's rights. Nevertheless, OIOS concurs with the assessment by the High-level Panel on Coherence that "there is a strong sense that the United Nations system's contribution [to the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment] has been incoherent, under-resourced and fragmented" (A/61/583, para. 47). The Panel further emphasized that "a decade's worth of effort to mainstream human rights in all areas of United Nations work shows limited progress" (A/61/583, para. 51).

C. The coordinating bodies are less effective in coordinating programme delivery and strengthening organizational performance

Coordination outcomes associated with programme delivery are limited

31. Programme managers and department focal points give the lowest ratings to coordination outcomes that are associated with programme delivery. One third or more of programme managers report that the seven coordinating bodies have not been useful in reducing duplication of efforts, enhancing effectiveness of programme delivery or rationalizing the use of resources; close to one half (42 per cent) say that the coordinating bodies have not had any utility in more efficient resource use.[18] Similarly, one half of department focal points (50 per cent) say that the coordinating bodies have had minimal or no impact on more efficient programme delivery. Even more (60 per cent) report a lack of impact with regard to increasing the satisfaction of programmes' clients.[19]

32. When asked what topics are insufficiently addressed by the seven coordinating bodies, many programme managers cite examples related to programme delivery, such as the integration of the role of special political missions into the work of the Secretariat; overlap and duplication between activities; joint use of resources and alignment of budgets; complementarity and rationalization of resources; coordinated staffing; and bringing consistency and synergy between the national, regional and global levels. Programme managers further indicate the need for a sustained working dialogue between the coordinating bodies and the teams responsible for implementing their policies and strategies and observe that some coordinating

[18] See annex III, figure A; individual ratings by coordinating body were averaged for an overall rating for all seven bodies.

[19] Ibid., figure B; individual ratings by coordinating body were averaged for an overall rating for all seven bodies. OIOS acknowledges that this criterion is not equally valid for all the bodies reviewed.

bodies are too remote from operational work taking place in the field. The High-level Panel on Coherence similarly notes that "a more coherent and better functioning United Nations would benefit developing countries" and that changes "need to be supported by similar coherence of functions at the centre" (A/61/583, para. 52).

The coordinating bodies have played little role in enhancing the performance of the Organization

33. OIOS was unable to ascertain any strong evidence of how the work of the coordinating bodies has resulted in positive changes in organizational performance. OIOS acknowledges that the coordinating bodies cannot be held directly accountable for change in the Organization. However, their coordination mandates imply that better coordinated policies, planning and programme implementation will result in stronger organizational performance. Nearly half of department focal points (48 per cent) report that the seven coordinating bodies have had minimal or no impact in increasing the quality of programme results.[20] Furthermore, while some describe examples of changes in their department that they directly attribute to a coordinating body, the majority refer to improved programme guidance, planning and coherence. Also, as will be discussed in paragraph 49, the coordinating bodies do not measure their own performance with regard to how their work results in organizational change.

34. Moreover, while more than 100 programme managers describe changes in their work areas attributable to the coordinating bodies in the scope of the present evaluation, these relate mainly to programme policy, guidance and planning. Examples given include guidance on system-wide joint messaging for development issues; clarification of a department's role in the integrated planning process and on issues related to rule of law; a clearer definition of the place of human rights in integrated United Nations peace operations; enhanced cooperation with the regional commissions; and joint planning of statistical activities. Changes cited in relation to activities at the country level are mostly attributed to the United Nations Development Group. These include the early recovery funding architecture, improvements in coordination, collaboration and the rationalization of programme delivery, and the enhanced accountability system for the resident coordinator system.[21]

35. OIOS notes that there are several reasons why the coordinating bodies are perceived as less effective in achieving integrated programme delivery and strengthening organizational performance. Integrated programme delivery generally requires greater commitment and collaboration in terms of investments of time and resources than coordination of policies or information sharing. Also, there are inherent challenges in translating the more strategic deliberations that occur in the seven coordinating bodies into integrated operations. Different frameworks for financial and human resources management and administrative rules and procedures that govern Secretariat activities tend to present obstacles, in particular for effective

[20] Individual ratings by coordinating body were averaged for an overall rating for all seven bodies; see annex III, figure B. OIOS recognizes that through the experiences with the "Delivering as one" pilot countries, members of the United Nations Development Group are reviewing how they can better support country operations.

[21] See "Management and accountability framework", United Nations Development Group, 2008.

coordination of programme delivery and efficient use of resources. Thus, the limited compatibility and lack of harmonized approaches across United Nations management and operational systems serve to constrain the extent to which coordination can be realized at the level of programme delivery. Separate governance structures between the Secretariat, funds, programmes and specialized agencies may further hinder harmonization of activities and reduction of duplication (see A/59/2005, paras. 196 and 197).

D. Weaknesses in structures and work processes of the coordinating bodies hinder the achievement of their respective objectives

Membership of coordinating bodies is unclear

36. Clear membership criteria are necessary for efficient functioning of the coordinating bodies. However, several factors currently impede this. First, most memberships of these bodies have increased significantly since their establishment, often without an accompanying strategy for managing such growth.[22] Interviewees nevertheless express their preference for inclusive and larger memberships as opposed to smaller memberships that would exclude some entities. Also, there is significant overlap in the respective memberships of the Executive Committees on Humanitarian Affairs and Peace and Security, of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Policy Committee and of the United Nations Development Group and the High-level Committee on Programmes (see annex I). Furthermore, the coordinating bodies have different types of membership: the Executive Committees on Economic and Social Affairs and Humanitarian Affairs have standing members and no observers; the Senior Management Group, the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security have both standing members and observers; the High-level Committee on Programmes and the Policy Committee have standing members, but invite other entities to participate as needed; and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Department of Political Affairs, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are standing members of the Policy Committee in their function as convenors of the four original executive committees. Also, a few interviewees mention that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as the designated representative of the Secretariat in the High-level Committee on Programmes, may not fully represent the positions of other Secretariat entities; however, the Department is required to ensure internal consultation with all relevant Secretariat entities.

The convenor roles of the coordinating bodies are not sufficiently well defined

37. While interviewees express their general satisfaction with management and leadership in the coordinating bodies, many state that the convenor functions need further clarification. Primarily at question is how the leadership role is understood

[22] Membership of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs has doubled, from 8 to 16 members; membership of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security has more than tripled, from 7 to 22 members; and the United Nations Development Group, with its current 28 members, has expanded to seven times its original size. In 2008 a 13-member United Nations Development Group Advisory Group was established to advise the chair and facilitate the work of the full Group.

and implemented by the various convenor departments. While members of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs appreciate the participatory leadership style of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, some members of the Executive Committee on Peace and Security describe the leadership of the Department of Political Affairs as less participatory. OIOS observed that some convenors facilitated frank exchanges and goal-oriented discussions, while others had a style that did not equally facilitate an open exchange of views. Some interviewees further volunteer that the convenors of the United Nations Development Group and the Executive Committees on Economic and Social Affairs and Peace and Security may put the interests of their own entities ahead of those of the coordinating body as a whole.[23] Interview data also indicate that convenors may not always fully execute their roles, such as regularly briefing their respective coordinating body members on Policy Committee discussions.[24] They also reveal perceptions that the convenors of the executive committees may not always fully communicate the perspectives of their respective coordinating body in Policy Committee meetings. This communication channel is of particular importance for entities, such as the regional commissions, that are represented in the Policy Committee only through a coordinating body convenor. A further option for sharing information on the Policy Committee could be through electronic means.

Gaps exist in work planning and agenda setting of coordinating bodies

38. Procedures for work planning and agenda setting differ among the seven coordinating bodies reviewed. Many interviewees declare strong satisfaction with the Policy Committee practice of developing a forward-looking agenda indicating the topics to be considered during the following three months, but report that meeting agendas of the Executive Committees on Humanitarian Affairs, Peace and Security and Economic and Social Affairs lack specificity and forward-looking orientation. In the case of the Senior Management Group, the Chef de Cabinet sets an agenda used for the préparation of talking points for the Secretary-General, but it is not circulated in advance. The Secretary-General identifies the agenda items at the outset of each meeting.[25] Interviewees say that for all coordinating bodies they prefer clear criteria for the selection of agenda items, opportunities to participate in agenda setting and more forward planning, which they say facilitates more results- and action-oriented discussions and broader ownership of the work of coordinating bodies by their members.

39. An OIOS review of agendas and background documentation for meetings of coordinating bodies reveals several deficiencies. Agendas for the Executive Committees on Economic and Social Affairs and Peace and Security, for example, include background information but do not clearly inform members whether the item presented is for information, discussion, endorsement or decision. The

[23] The chair (UNDP) and vice chair (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) of the United Nations Development Group usually take turns in chairing the meetings with a view of further facilitating focus on joint interests.

[24] OIOS notes that differences in the frequency of meetings, in particular between the weekly meetings of the Policy Committee and the monthly or less frequent meetings of the executive committees, can give the impression that briefings on the meetings of the Policy Committee come too late to be useful to members of the executive committees.

[25] Communication from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General to OIOS dated 3 March 2009.

Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Group documents are more structured. OIOS notes that United Nations Development Group agendas list numerous and often detailed background documents and do not summarize key points, thus making it cumbersome for readers to understand the main points of the item(s) being discussed; a one-page decision sheet is prepared for each background document, summarizing main points and expected results of decisions. The High-level Committee on Programmes and the Policy Committee agendas and documents are presented in comparatively the shortest and clearest formats. The High-level Committee on Programmes introduced new rules of procedure in July 2008, including guidelines on documentation management. The Policy Committee manual includes guidelines, procedures, timelines and indicative models for submissions of its members. For example, it requires the submission of suggestions for agenda items no later than three weeks before a meeting and restricts submissions to a maximum of three pages, although this may not always occur in practice.[26] The manual further requires a designated lead department for the preparation of each submission; the latter is responsible for consulting with all concerned. OIOS considers the Policy Committee manual and the High-level Committee on Programmes rules of procedure good practices and recommends that they be emulated by other coordinating bodies.

40. Timely receipt of summarized information before the meetings of coordinating bodies is also seen as critical by members. Most interviewees state that they would prefer more timely and concise documentation than currently received. While many say 10 days to two weeks before the meeting is ideal so they can consult colleagues appropriately, OIOS acknowledges that this is not always possible. However, OIOS notes that convenors and coordinating body secretariats should be expected to disseminate documentation earlier than shortly before meetings, which many interviewees describe as current practice.

Meeting procedures of coordinating bodies are inconsistent

41. A further challenge to efficient functioning of the coordinating bodies is inconsistency in who can and cannot attend. Meetings of the Policy Committee and the Senior Management Group are usually at the under-secretary-general level; participation of lower level representatives has been granted. Similarly, United Nations Development Group Advisory Group attendance requires an assistant secretary-general or assistant director-general. The remaining coordinating bodies also encourage attendance of department heads or designated senior deputies. However, senior managers interviewed state that departments cannot always comply with these attendance requirements. In particular, organizations that are smaller and not based in New York face difficulties because of their size or because their principals are at lower levels. Many interviewees note that it is crucial that representatives at meetings of coordinating bodies are authorized to make informed decisions for their entities; therefore, it may be useful for members to designate alternates, with meetings open to both members and alternates.

42. OIOS notes that implementation of decisions of coordinating bodies can only occur if all parties concerned are up-to-date on the decisions they are expected to implement. OIOS considers websites an essential tool for expanding access to information on coordinating bodies and thus increasing transparency. In order to

[26] Members and non-members may suggest agenda items.

protect sensitive information the websites may include security measures allowing different groups of designated users access to limited parts of the information stored. OIOS notes that, currently, several coordinating bodies do not have websites and the websites of some others are difficult to locate. Further, some contain limited and out-of-date information. It may be useful to link the various sites through a common web portal at a prominent location, once they are established and regularly updated.

43. Since most meetings of coordinating bodies are held in New York, video- and telephone conferences are frequent. However, almost all senior managers interviewed remark that current videoconference modalities do not support effective dialogue between the different locations. OIOS witnessed difficulties with these modalities in the meetings it observed. For example, in one meeting there was no identification of participants who intervened during the meeting, making it impossible for people not in the room to know who was speaking. OIOS notes that to benefit from the advantages of face-to-face meetings, convenors of coordinating bodies may consider holding at least one annual face-to-face meeting, the timing of which should be coordinated with other occasions that require the presence of senior representatives of entities in one location.

44. Further efficiencies in coordinating body meetings could be achieved if meetings are held on a regular, well-known and predictable schedule. Such arrangements would facilitate the planning of senior officials' schedules, maximizing participation and controlling costs, especially if meetings are held in conjunction with other events that require the presence of senior officials. For example, a tentative meeting schedule has been set up at the beginning of 2009 for both the United Nations Development Group and its Advisory Group. Their meetings have been scheduled back-to-back to maximize participation.

Resources allocated to the coordinating bodies are uneven

45. Secretariat arrangements for servicing the coordinating bodies differ with regard to staff and resource levels, and assessments of these by stakeholders vary. Most interviewees are satisfied with the current resource allocation for coordinating body secretariats, basing their assessment on the understanding that the secretariats' primary role is to facilitate the organization and follow-up of meetings, although the coordinating body secretariats report that additional resources would enable them to do their work more efficiently. The one exception is the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, which most interviewees agree does not have sufficient resources to ensure the efficient functioning of that body. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs has the smallest secretariat capacity, with one part-time Professional staff member of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Senior Management Group operate with approximately one part-time Professional and one part-time General Service staff member each. The secretariats of the Policy Committee, the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the High-level Committee on Programmes have slightly more dedicated resources, mainly from the

convenor departments and a small number of seconded staff. [27] The United Nations Development Group has the largest secretariat, the Development Operations Coordination Office, with 46 UNDP and seconded staff.[28] OIOS notes, however, that only two of those staff are dedicated to function as the secretariat of the Development Group, on the understanding that its primary role is to facilitate the organization and follow-up of meetings. The responsibilities of the Coordination Office further include the provision of substantive services and support to country offices. Senior managers have different opinions on the Coordination Office, with some indicating that it is already overwhelmed with administrative support and others believing that it should provide more substantive services because of its large staff.

46. The capacity of members of coordinating bodies to support the bodies' work is also considered low. Department focal point survey data indicate that the large majority of Secretariat departments have no resources formally allocated to the work of coordinating bodies. When asked to estimate how many staff members in their department are working full-time on work for coordinating bodies, 18 out of 28 department focal points report no dedicated staff.

Monitoring of implementation of coordinating body decisions and measuring of coordinating body performance is sporadic

47. With the exception of the Senior Management Group, which is not a decision-making forum, the convenor secretariats of the other six coordinating bodies facilitate follow-up on decisions; OIOS commends this good practice.[29] The Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs monitors decision implementation via quarterly and annual reports, which is similar to the follow-up mechanism of the United Nations Development Group, in which decisions and action points are registered in the minutes of the Group's meetings and followed up with relevant working groups. The Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs has no formal review mechanism in place, but implementation of decisions is a standing item on the agenda of meetings of the principals and followed up through the work of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs deputies and clusters. Members of the High-level Committee on Programmes are assigned specific

[27] Secretariat resources for the coordinating bodies are as follows: Policy Committee — 1 Professional staff member from the Executive Office of the Secretary-General, 50 per cent financing of 1 Professional staff member temporarily seconded from UNDP, 1 part-time Professional staff member temporarily from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; Senior Management Group — 1 Professional and 1 General Service staff member both working for the secretariat in addition to their functions in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General; Executive Committee on Peace and Security — 1 part-time Professional and 1 part-time General Service staff member from the Department of Political Affairs; Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs — 2 Professional staff members (one of which part-time for the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and one part-time for the Policy Committee) and 1 junior professional officer from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs; High-level Committee on Programmes — 2 Professional staff members from the Chief Executives Board secretariat (the costs are shared by member organizations (see A/62/6 (Sect. 30), table 30.12)) and 1 seconded Professional staff member.

[28] The Development Operations Coordination Office is comprised of 35.75 UNDP staff, 5.25 seconded staff members, 4 Government-funded junior professional officers and 1 staff member on reimbursable loan.

[29] OIOS is aware that a note taker prepares meeting minutes and distributes these to members of the Senior Management Group.

implementation tasks and, assisted by the secretariat, report back on their activities. The Policy Committee secretariat uses a matrix of decisions to report to its members on implementation every three months.

48. However, some limitations to the follow-up exist. For example, OIOS notes that implementation of many Policy Committee decisions is "ongoing". This may be the result of the shorter reporting period for implementation reviews (quarterly reviews, instead of every six months or even less frequently during the first phase of the Policy Committee's existence) and the substantial number of decisions relating to thematic issues that, by their nature, provide medium- to long-term strategic direction or involve tasks that are of an ongoing nature. There is also a separate category of "delayed" decisions, of which there are relatively few. Further, many interviewees refer to Policy Committee decisions as broad, leaving room for interpretation on how they are to be implemented by the respective entities concerned, which may also contribute to their slow implementation. In this context, many interviewees cite the lack of incentives for implementing decisions of coordinating bodies. OIOS also notes that the coordinating bodies often lack a specified time frame with clear deadlines for implementation of their decisions. In reviewing coordinating body documents, OIOS further notes that specific guidance on action to be taken following a decision by a body is inconsistently provided.

49. OIOS finds that the coordinating bodies in the scope of the present evaluation have not set up systems to systematically measure their own performance, although there have been some efforts at self-assessment. In 1999, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security undertook a performance assessment through a satisfaction survey of its members and in 2002 it consulted Committee members on enhancing the workplan and objectives of the new secretariat. The Secretary of the Policy Committee, after the first year of the Committee's operation, in 2006, held meetings with senior officials of member and non-member departments in order to get feedback on various aspects of its work. This resulted in a list of proposed actions to strengthen the Policy Committee and a compilation of key lessons learned. In 2007, the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs engaged in a lessons learned exercise.[30] OIOS commends these initiatives, but notes that more regular and systematic performance measurement against clearly defined goals and targets need to be undertaken if coordinating bodies want to enhance their work and demonstrate the achievement of results. Coordinating bodies may consider emulating the practice of the United Nations Development Group, which prepares an annual workplan and summarizes achievements against the workplan at the end of the year. In addition, the Development Group reports annually through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs on progress in implementing the General Assembly resolution on the triennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities of the United Nations system (for example, resolution 62/208).

[30] See note addressed to the Deputy Secretary-General by then head of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Ocampo, on 30 March 2007.

E. The coordinating bodies lack clarity and coherence in their respective roles and objectives

Mandates lack specificity

50. There remains a lack of clarity around the respective roles and related objectives of the coordinating bodies. OIOS acknowledges the inherent challenge in defining such intangible concepts as "coordination" and "coherence". It is reasonable that coordination is defined and operationalized differently by the various bodies: as previously discussed, some are clearly no more than information-sharing forums, while others are more proactively engaged in joint decision-making and joint programming, and the core purpose of the Policy Committee is to enable the Secretary-General to make decisions.

51. A review of the mandates of the coordinating bodies reveals some ambiguity and overlap. The terms of reference of the High-level Committee on Programmes state that it will foster coherence, cooperation and coordination on programme dimensions of strategic issues for the United Nations system, and the United Nations Development Group "designs system-wide guidance to coordinate, harmonize and align United Nations development activities".[31] The four original executive committees were established as "instruments of policy development, decision-making and management" with an aim of "reducing duplication [...] and facilitating greater complementarity and coherence" (A/51/950, para. 29). The Policy Committee was established "for the purposes of streamlining and improving the decision-making processes at the executive level in the Secretariat" and "considers issues requiring strategic guidance and policy decisions on thematic and country-specific issues" (ST/SGB/2005/16). The Senior Management Group serves "as a forum for exchange of information and experiences among all the heads of departments, offices, funds and programmes of the United Nations" and the Secretary-General "may use the Senior Management Group to raise and provide guidance on important cross-cutting issues" (ST/SGB/2005/16). Given its almost exclusive focus on sharing information, some interviewees question whether the Senior Management Group is truly a coordinating mechanism. OIOS notes that of all the seven bodies reviewed, the coordination role of the Senior Management Group is least clear. The Executive Office of the Secretary-General clarified that the coordination aspect of the Senior Management Group follows from the presence at its meetings of all the heads of United Nations departments, offices, funds and programmes to receive guidance and strategic priorities from the Secretary-General. OIOS notes again the variability in the scope of the coordinating bodies, with only the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group operating with a system-wide mandate.

52. Given these broad mandates, clarity and precision in the bodies' roles are especially important and should be linked to concrete objectives and deliverables. However, this is not always the case. Interview data reveal differences in how members perceive the bodies; for example, some senior managers describe the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs as a decision-making body, while others say it simply provides a forum for sharing information. Furthermore, some interviewees state that the goals of the Executive Committee on Economic and

[31] United Nations Development Group, fact sheet, provided to OIOS by the Development Operations Coordination Office, 17 October 2008.

Social Affairs are unclear, and others claim not to understand the purpose of the Senior Management Group, nor to be sure of the coordination expectations associated with it. OIOS notes that this lack of a common understanding detracts from the utility of the coordinating bodies as coordinating mechanisms.

Coherence between the coordinating bodies is lacking

53. Some interviewees express concerns about the lack of overall coherence between the numerous coordinating entities in the Organization, including but not limited to the seven bodies reviewed in the present evaluation. Concern is raised that a multitude of meetings on overlapping topics diminishes their value and that inefficiencies result from debate and disagreements on whether a particular issue belongs to one body or another. Interviewees offer several examples of overlaps between the seven coordinating bodies in the scope of the evaluation. They mention in particular the widely overlapping membership between the Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs as well as thematic overlaps between the Executive Committee on Peace and Security and the Policy Committee, since the latter frequently discusses and decides on peace and security issues. The same issues are often discussed in the meetings of the Policy Committee, in weekly meetings of senior advisers with the Secretary-General and in meetings of the Senior Management Group, given that the Secretary-General uses the Senior Management Group when appropriate to discuss strategic matters that are subsequently further elaborated upon at Policy Committee meetings. OIOS contends that more streamlining of what the bodies address and how they address it is therefore needed. OIOS notes that the secretariats and directors of the Chief Executives Board, the High-level Committee on Management, the High-level Committee on Programmes and the United Nations Development Group meet regularly to enhance coordination between the three pillars of the Board and to exchange information.

V. Conclusion

54. In an organization with complex and often overlapping mandates, coordination becomes crucial. Yet the full range of coordination outcomes is not easy to achieve, as these outcomes involve a wide spectrum of goals from information sharing to joint programming to integrated resource use. Coordinating bodies add value in aligning policies and sharing information, but are less effective in coordinating programme delivery and strengthening organizational performance. The mechanisms that have been established to facilitate coordination for Secretariat programmes, not only between themselves but also with other United Nations system partners, have added value to increasing complementarity and coherence. But these are only the first steps; more needs to be done before the Organization can be said to be a unified entity with a common vision, strategy and course of action. The risks to the Organization if this does not occur are great, and these are risks the Organization can ill afford to take. It is only through strengthened coordination efforts and through a genuine commitment to work together rather than side-by-side, that the Organization will be fully successful in realizing its ambitions.

VI. Recommendations

Recommendation 1 (paras. 50-53)

55. **The Secretary-General should review and refine the respective mandates and composition of the four original executive committees** in view of organizational changes that have occurred since their establishment in 1997.[12] The Secretary-General may consider appropriate provisions to enable the coordinating bodies to efficiently and effectively implement their mandates. In addition, given the wide overlap in membership and scope of work between the Executive Committees on Peace and Security and Humanitarian Affairs, and the existence of other well-functioning coordination mechanisms, such as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in the area of humanitarian affairs and the inter-agency framework for coordination on preventive action (framework team), the Secretary-General may consider merging these two executive committees in order to create one body concerned with the coordination of humanitarian, peace and security matters. He may alternatively consider strengthening their coordination in order to minimize inefficiencies and duplication.

The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs stated that [there was] very little overlap in scope of the work [between the two bodies]. Both areas [peace and security and humanitarian affairs] required completely different discussions. Furthermore, it was crucial that discussions about humanitarian action, which should be provided on an impartial, neutral, independent basis, were not, nor seen to be, in the same context as political discussions.

The Department of Political Affairs noted that there were important connections between the activities of the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs and the Executive Committee on Peace and Security. Whereas the Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs provided an important platform for humanitarian coordination, especially in the adoption of action points among agencies, funds and programmes, the Executive Committee on Peace and Security provided a forum for coordination and information sharing at the political level. These were two distinct types of discussion that, especially in view of existing humanitarian principles, should have their respective forums.

Recommendation 2 (paras. 51 and 53)

56. **The Secretary-General should review and refine the role of the Senior Management Group**, given the increase in other means for achieving its primary purpose of information sharing, as well as the overlap with regard to the information shared in the Group and other coordinating mechanisms. He may as one option reconsider the meeting schedule of the Senior Management Group so that it meets less frequently than its current schedule of twice a month, but often enough to keep abreast of and respond to current events and issues. Further, as a result of the travel schedule of the Secretary-General, the Senior Management Group does not always meet every two weeks (for example in 2008, it met some 14 times). This reconsideration of its meeting schedule should occur within the context of further clarifying the terms of reference of the Group, as requested in recommendation 3.

Recommendation 3 (paras. 36-49)

57. **The convenors of the seven coordinating bodies, in consultation with their memberships, should strengthen the working procedures of the respective bodies** in order to increase their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. In particular, all convenors should ensure that the respective coordinating bodies:

(a) Have well-defined terms of reference that clearly spell out the role and responsibilities of convenor and members, for submission to the Secretary-General for approval;

(b) Prepare formal results-based workplans that specify the objectives, expected deliverables and results, responsible lead entities and timelines for completion of work;

(c) Develop forward-looking agendas that are shared with members sufficiently in advance before a meeting;[32]

(d) Refine criteria for membership, for submission to the Secretary-General for approval, and refine meeting representation;

(e) Have a website that is easily accessible, informative and regularly updated, including measures to protect confidential information, as necessary;

The Department of Political Affairs stated that the establishment and maintenance of an Executive Committee on Peace and Security website would not be the best use of existing limited resources.

(f) Have state-of-the-art videoconferencing facilities, as well as other technologies for remote communication, including web-based instruments, available and appropriately used in all duty stations in order to facilitate full participation by all coordinating body members, in particular those located away from Headquarters.

The Department of Economic and Social Affairs stated that, on communications, there was a need to consider the resource implications.

The Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) stated that this recommendation would necessitate the allocation of [...] more resources. ESCWA also stated that the recommendations did not address the resource allocation constraints that were mentioned under paragraphs 45 and 46 of the report.

Recommendation 4 (para. 37)

58. **The Secretary-General should request the convenors of the four original executive committees to regularly brief their members on deliberations and decisions of the Policy Committee**, taking into account necessary confidentiality. He should further request that convenors keep the Policy Committee informed about deliberations and decisions of their committees, as relevant.

Recommendation 5 (paras. 33-35 and 47-49)

59. **All convenors of coordinating bodies should monitor and report to the Secretary-General on the implementation of the workplans (and in the case of**

[32] OIOS recognizes that the Senior Management Group is not a decision-making forum and does not lend itself to the implementation of results-based workplans and forward-looking agendas.

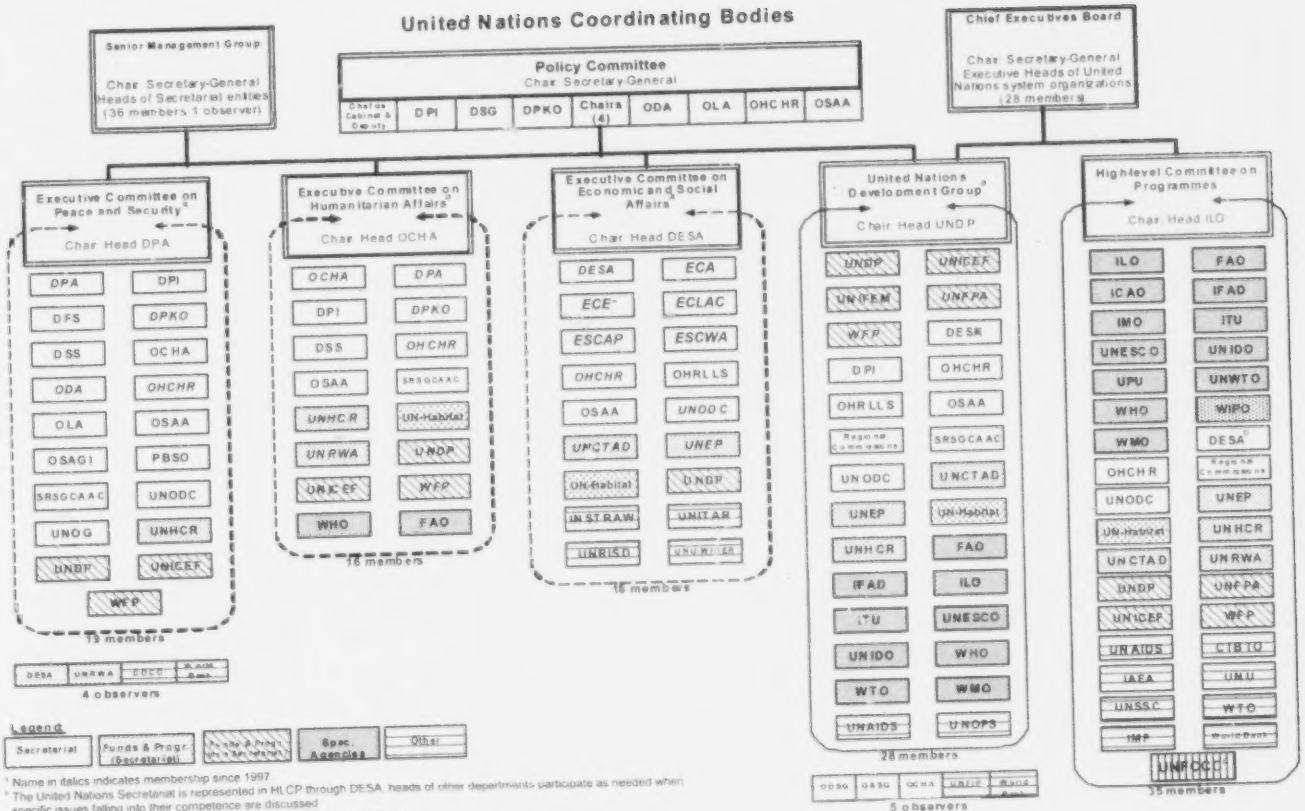
the Senior Management Group, meeting agendas) of their respective coordinating bodies in the form of annualized reporting on results achieved in order to strengthen the accountability of the coordinating bodies. OIOS recognizes that the coordinating bodies do not have direct responsibility for monitoring programme delivery resulting from these decisions.

ESCWA stated that this recommendation would necessitate the allocation of [...] more resources.

(*Signed*) Inga-Britt **Ahlenius**
Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services
9 April 2009

Annex I

United Nations coordinating bodies



[a] Name in italics indicates membership since 1997

[b] The United Nations Secretariat is represented in HLCP through DESA; heads of other departments participate as needed when specific issues falling into their competence are discussed

[c] UNFCCC is currently participating in HLCP in the context of climate change

Annex II

United Nations coordinating bodies: overview

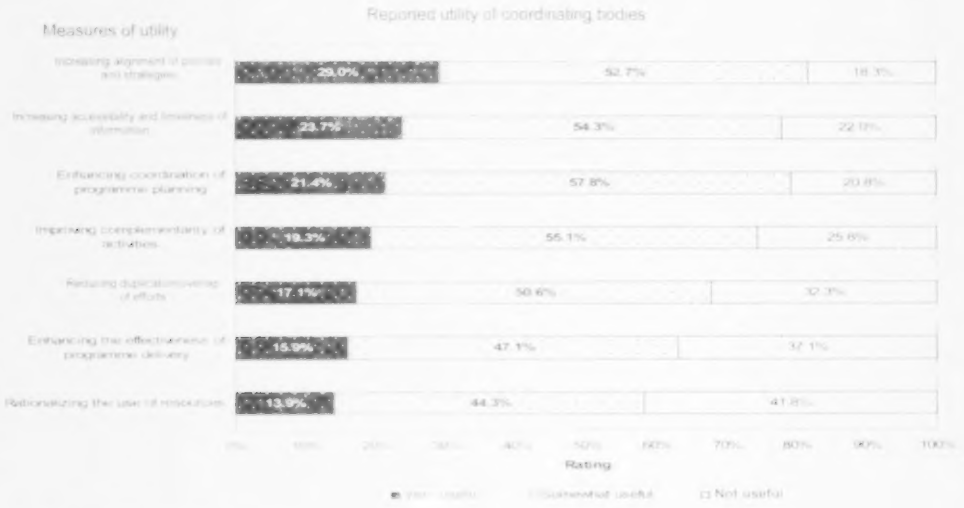
Coordinating body	*Created*	*Mandate*	*Convenor*	*Secretariat staff*	*Members*	*Observers*	*Website*
Executive Committee on Peace and Security	1997	... examine ways to strengthen cooperation among the departments concerned, in particular with regard to information gathering and analysis and to gain the maximum possible benefit from lessons learned in the conduct of field missions ... responsible for the design and implementation of post-conflict peace-building initiatives ... (A/51/950, paras. 117 and 121 and action 5)	Department of Political Affairs	1 P, 1 GS — part-time	19	4	http://www.un.org/depts/dpa/ecps.html
Executive Committee on Humanitarian Affairs	1997	... examine ways to strengthen cooperation among the departments concerned, in particular with regard to information gathering and analysis and to gain the maximum possible benefit from lessons learned in the conduct of field missions (A/51/950, para. 117)	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	1.5 P part-time; 1 JPO, 1 GS	16	—	—
Executive Committee of Economic and Social Affairs	1997	... is actively pursuing modalities to pool more effectively the Organization's resources and capacities in key areas, such as the preparation of economic and social surveys, and to achieve a more efficient division of labour within the Secretariat (A/51/950, para. 139)	Department of Economic and Social Affairs	1 P — part-time	18	—	http://www.un.org/esa/ecesa
United Nations Development Group	1997; since 2008 under United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination	... facilitate joint policy formation and decision-making, encourage programmatic cooperation and realize management efficiencies ... at the regional and country levels (A/51/950, para. 73)	United Nations Development Programme (under-secretary-general authority)	2 full-time staff	28	5	http://www.undg.org
Senior Management Group	1997	... forum for exchange of information and experiences among all the heads of departments, offices, funds and programmes of the United Nations... to raise and provide guidance on important cross-cutting issues (ST/SGB/2005/16, para. 3.1)	Secretary-General	1 P, 1 GS — part-time	36	1	http://www.un.org/sg/management.shtml
Policy Committee	2005	... shall consider issues requiring strategic guidance and policy decisions on thematic and country-specific issues affecting the Organization and shall identify emerging issues (ST/SGB/2005/16, para. 1.1)	Secretary-General	2 P; 1 P — part-time	13	—	—

Coordinating body	*Created*	*Mandate*	*Convenor*	*Secretariat staff*	*Members*	*Observers*	*Website*
High-level Committee on Programmes	Reorganized in 2000	Principal mechanism for system-wide coordination in the programme area; advises CEB on issues of strategic planning, policy and programme development and implementation and priority areas	Chair, vice-chair CEB-appointed (2 years)	3 P	35	—	http://hlcp.unsystem ceb.org

Annex III

Reported utility and impact of coordinating bodies

Figure A*



Source: Programme managers survey.

Figure B*

Source: Department focal point survey.

* Percentages refer to respondents who expressed an opinion.